REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 5-8, 11-13, and 26-28 are pending in this application. Claims 14, 16-18, and 20-22 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter (Claims 3, 4, 9, 10, 15, 19, and 23-25 were canceled previously). Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, and 11-13 have been amended to even further clarify the claimed subject matter. New Claims 26-28 have been added to provide a more complete scope of protection for Applicants. Claims 1, 6, 11, 26, 27, and 28 are in independent form.

Claims 1, 2, 5-8, 11-14, 16-18, and 20-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,434,265 *(Xiong et al.)*, and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,271,855 *(Shum et al.)*.

Claim 1 as amended, is directed to an image synthesis method. Among notable features of the method are (i) a placement information step, of generating placement information determined by a placement order of all images inputted in the input step, and (ii) a setting step, of automatically setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes each corresponding to a different mapping surface in accordance with the obtained placement information.

The Office Action relies on col. 8, lines 18-58 of *Xiong et al.* in support of the above rejection. That portion of *Xiong et al.* is seen to disclose that overlapping photographs are analyzed to determine what orientation the photographs were taken in order to establish a common ground for subsequent operations, including the construction of a panorama. The panorama is constructed on a particular geometry that will best facilitate the subsequent step (sometimes termed rendering) of the projection of the panorama from the particular geometry onto a chosen viewing plane for viewing by a user

(col. 8, lines 24-33). The Examiner has interpreted this feature to be a setting step corresponding to that of Claim 1.

However, nothing has been found in *Xiong et al.* that would teach or suggest generating placement information by determining a placement order of all images inputted, obtaining placement information about plural images in which adjacent images have a common subject region, and setting one mapping mode in accordance with the obtained placement information, as recited in Claim 1. Indeed, *Xiong et al.* is not seen to teach or suggest how to select among plural surfaces, as in Claim 1. In addition, the Office Action at page 4 states that, according to col. 4, lines 40-50 of *Xiong et al.*, a user can manually select (through a user interface 230) a geometry which will be projected onto. However, *Xiong et al.* is not seen to teach or suggest automatically setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes each corresponding to a different mapping surface in accordance with the obtained placement information, as recited in Claim 1.

Furthermore in *Xiong et al.*, each image is synthesized onto a predetermined surface one by one to determine its placement (*Xiong et al.*, col. 15, lines 20-33). Such a step would not enable the method disclosed by *Xiong et al.* to determine placement information that is determined by the placement order of all images, as taught in Claim 1 of the present invention.

Shum et al. is cited in the Office Action as teaching the warning and generating of a synthesized image in accordance with a predetermined condition, but is not seen to teach or suggest anything that would cure the above-noted deficiencies of *Xiong et al.*

Accordingly, for at least the reasons discussed above, Applicants submit

that Claim 1 is deemed clearly patentable over *Xiong et al.* and *Shum et al.*, whether considered separately or in combination.

Claim 26 is similar to Claim 1 in that Claim 26 recites the steps of (i) a placement information step, of generating the placement information determined by the placement order of all images inputted in the input step, (ii) a placement information obtaining step, and (iii) a setting step, of automatically setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes each corresponding to a different mapping surface in accordance with the obtained placement information. For at least the same reasons as those discussed above regarding Claim 1, Claim 26 is believed to be clearly patentable over *Xiong et al.* and *Shum et al.*, whether considered separately or in combination.

The other independent claims are each respectively either an apparatus or a computer memory medium claim corresponding to one or the other of method Claims 1 and 26, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with the respective latter claims.

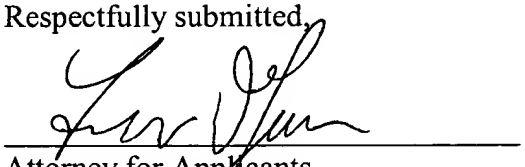
A review of the other art of record, has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' attorney of record may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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